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Minutes

Faculty Senate

10-6-2015

October 6, 2015

Faculty Senate

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Faculty Senate Session Minutes
October 6th, 2015, 2:00 pm
Booth Library Conference Room

PRESENT: Teshome Abebe, Todd Bruns, Stefan Eckert, Nichole Hugo, Jeannie Ludlow, Jemmie Robertson, Grant Sterling, Jeff Stowell, Jason Waller, Bailey Young, Stephen Simpson (student member)

Absent/excused: James Ochwa-Echel, Tony Oliver, Amy Rosenstein, Steve Scher, Jody Abell (student member)

GUESTS: John Allison, Gary Aylesworth, Suzann Bennett, James Conwell, Mahyar Izadi, Renee King, Blair Lord

Please note: these minutes do not comprise an exact transcript of the meeting.

Chair Robertson called the meeting to order at 2:07 pm.

I. Welcome

II. Approval of Minutes from September 29th, 2015

Sterling moved to approve/Eckert seconded. Motion passed: 9 yes /0 no /1 abstain

III. NEW ITEM: letter of condolences to the family of Dr. Webb

Chair Robertson will draft a letter from the Senate to the family of Dr. Webb.

IV. Committee Reports

1. Executive Committee

a. Petition Concerning Faculty Referendum

Robertson—Faculty Senate received a petition last Fri.

The Faculty Senate Constitution, article 12, part 3 reads: “Twenty percent or more of the faculty eligible to vote in the Faculty Senate elections can petition the Faculty Senate to hold a referendum. The Senate shall hold a referendum within four weeks following receipt of said petition. Author(s) of said petition must present the petition to the Faculty Senate and explain the intended purpose of the referendum.”

“I’ve invited the authors here today.” Executive committee verified the signatures on the petition.

Stowell—I verified the signatures. I know personally about half the names on the petition. The names of people I did not know, I checked on the EIU webpage directory to confirm that they are current employees and voting faculty at EIU. We have a sufficient number of verified signatures.

Robertson—we removed the signatures and shared the referendum petition with Senators.

b. Professors Aylesworth and Conwell: Explanation of Referendum’s Intended Purpose

Conwell—after I left Senate, I was approached by several people who wanted faculty to have the opportunity to share opinions regarding whether we think the Provost, Blair Lord, has done a good job in the last 12 years and whether we have confidence that he will do a good job in the coming years, given our circumstances.

These were the broadly-defined concerns that led to the petition: transparency; shared governance; choosing Deans; admissions; how resources are allocated. “This era has come to an end.” When I ask Deans how decisions are made, I do not get direct answers. We need to know how decisions are made. If shared governance is to be true, faculty need to have the opportunity to share their opinions.

This is a public document—People signed the petition knowing that it was a public document. Gary [Aylesworth] and I both had people asking if they could sign the petition after we had already submitted it.

Aylesworth—A number of colleagues approached me about the desirability and feasibility of having such a referendum. It seemed there was support. Momentum built. The petition is not a vote itself; it is calling for a vote. Some of our colleagues in the most vulnerable positions felt they had little say in this, no way to participate in the process. That’s kind of what put me over the threshold, made me willing to put forth a petition. I don’t want to see colleagues be vulnerable and have no say.

Faculty will not have a voice unless we give ourselves a voice.

Robertson—Thank you, both. Questions?

Eckert—purpose of the petition is to see if there is support or no support?

Aylesworth—yes. It asks for the opportunity to take a position.

Eckert—Should we organize a forum? Or should it just go to a vote?

Robertson—Our constitution calls for Senate to organize a vote. We don’t even vote on this in Senate.

Stowell—our process asks for clarification on the background, the reason for the petition. This verbal explanation is helpful. Is there something we could have in writing?

Waller—Isn’t 20% of faculty calling for the vote enough?

Robertson—Nothing in the constitution requires faculty to provide something in writing.

Conwell—We did a similar petition several years ago. Our concern is that a concrete list of concerns might confuse people. Such a list may cause people not to sign the petition or not to feel confident in their vote. It depends on how people might interpret such a list—do I have to agree with every point on this list before I sign?

Aylesworth—We wanted to keep the petition straightforward. It is a vote of confidence or no-confidence. The referendum might look different, but the petition was kept simple and straightforward.

Ludlow—Are we planning, then, to have a list of concerns on the referendum? if it might look different from the petition?

Aylesworth—No, I don’t think we should. We want to provide a clean set up with

no built-in bias. Many evaluative processes end up biased, with cherry-picked results. I want a clean referendum—confidence or not.

Allison—I've been a part of two petition processes of this kind in past. When we came to Senate to explain our reasons, we stated them and that was the end of it. Nothing further was required or necessary.

Waller—Our constitution says once the criteria are met, it is our job to set it up.

Robertson—I agree. Within the next 4 weeks, we should hold a referendum on this petition. It would be best for all faculty if we did the fall special election concurrently. Would the 1st week of November be reasonable?

One drawback to keep in mind: in recent elections, we've had some technical glitches, but the voting process was available for only a short period of time. For something as substantive as this, I feel we should have a longer open period to encourage a high percentage of participation. And perhaps we should run a test before sending out the vote.

Eckert—A forum beforehand might be useful, just to allow people to share their institutional memory, their knowledge of why this is happening.

Robertson—That would be fine, as long as forum is not confused with voting, as long as it stays nonpartisan.

Allison—When earlier referenda came up, it was ultimately decided that the language of the article should be followed.

Bruns—Does that mean we couldn't have a forum?

Allison—No, but you can't require those who brought the petition forward to do that additional step.

Bruns—Perhaps another way to think about the forum could be to look at where we (by which I mean the whole campus) have gone wrong in the last 5 years. What could we all have done better? Where has Faculty Senate, for example, been?

Conwell—People who live out of town may not read their email on a day when they are not on campus. That was one of the problems with having two-day voting. We need to have a longer period and have daily reminders to vote.

Sterling—I want to emphasize that the important thing is that we have a large turnout. Faculty Senate members do not have to take a stand on how people vote, but we should all do everything we can to get a large turnout. The worst thing would be if only 30% of the faculty voted. We need the vote on this to be a substantial percentage. Thinking from the point of view of the president, what do you do if you get the results of such a vote and only a small fraction of faculty voted at all?

Robertson—any more comments? Let's move forward on our committee reports.

2. Nominations Committee

no report

3. Elections Committee

One position will be on the ballot for the Fall special election: an LCBAS representative

for the Academic Program Elimination Review committee.

Provost Lord—The two positions on the Sanctions and Terminations committee will be filled as per the contract.

4. Faculty-Student Relations Committee

no report

5. Faculty-Staff Relations Committee

Senator Ochwa-Echel will attend a meeting next week.

6. Awards Committee

Hugo—the PDF call for nominations for the Mendez Award was sent out; waiting to receive the nominations back.

7. Faculty Forum Committee

Bruns—Is there value in a faculty forum on shared governance in the last 5 years and in the future? [General nodding around the table.] I will look into this.

8. Budget Transparency Committee

no report

9. Constitution and By-Laws Review Committee

no report

10. Committee on Committees

Will be meeting this Thu.

11. Ad hoc Committee on Extracurricular Athletics

Robertson—I have spoken with Sen. Rosenstein; she is deliberating if she will chair or serve. I will contact members and ask them to assign a chair of that committee.

V. Communications

a. Petition To Faculty Senate Concerning Referendum (Topic Only – Signatures Removed)

See discussion, above.

b. E-mail from Andrew McNitt concerning Commitment to Excellence Scholarships

See item V below.

c. CAA Minutes from 9/24/2015

d. Email of support for Provost Lord, from Billie Rawlings—provided to Senators at the meeting.

Sterling—It is important to make very clear that this petition is not sponsored by Faculty Senate. We are required by our Constitution to carry out this process once faculty have submitted a petition.

Bruns—Perhaps Sen. Sterling could write a short letter saying as such to the DEN?

Abebe—I question the wisdom of putting information in the papers and creating national or regional news. I question whether we should add any more coverage.

Robertson—Let's wait and see if the *DEN* publishes anything about this, and then respond if we see the need.

- e. Letter of support for Provost Lord sent to President Glassman, cc'd to Faculty Senate, from Jeffrey Cross, Candace Flatt, Janet Fopay, Karen Johnson, and Billie Rawlings.

VI. Provost's Report: Blair Lord

Two quick items:

- A. Night before last, Vince Gutowski, well-known emeritus faculty member in Geology/Geography (GIS) died.
- B. Lord now convenes the Enrollment Management Advisory Committee. There are gaps in the membership. Could Faculty Senate please get the membership of that committee to the Provost?

VII. NEW ITEM: former student Senator Shirmeen Ahmad addresses the Senate about the "It's On Us" campaign. Student Senate started this campaign last year and is trying now to expand it. "It's On Us" is a nation-wide campaign about sexual assault on campuses. President Obama and Vice President Biden are behind this campaign. EIU's Student Government is asking for a fully engaged campus on this campaign. We don't want this to be just students; we want the faculty to be involved, too. We have a video on Youtube from last year (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwr7oAbl7iE>). This year, we want to make another video, a PSA, from our campus, and we'd like to have one featuring Faculty and Administrators, too. We want to put together a committee of people who would liaise between the campaign and their constituencies.

Bruns—Who is this committee under?

Ahmad—Student government; myself.

Stowell—What kind of campaign is it? awareness?

Ahmad—The campaign includes many different types of actions: pledge drives; awareness-raising events; trainings (self-defense, etc.); outreach events; sexual assault climate surveys; social media campaigns.

Stowell—Are you partnering with SACIS?

Ahmad—Yes, with SACIS; also with EIU PD, Greek life, EIU FEM (Women's Studies RSO). I want to learn a lot and make our events relevant. I want us to be visible.

Robertson—Thank you. I applaud your efforts. I read *Missoula* this summer. It's a controversial book in Montana right now, about an overall culture in the U.S. that we need to educate students about. We want our campus to be safe.

Ahmad—that's our goal. There are people who are willing to step up and talk about their experiences.

Bruns—Are you looking into something like Safe Zone training?

Ahmad—We are looking into that.

Ahmad—We have PSA scripts provided by the campaign. The national campaign just came out with a new PSA with celebrities. We are also trying to get tshirts and sell them.

Ludlow—Are you working with the Sexual Violence Prevention Team?

Ahmad—Yes, I am a member of that group now.

Ludlow—Just a couple of observations about how we talk about this on campus. We want our campus to be safer. We shouldn't say we are making it safe. We cannot guarantee safety and we shouldn't speak as if we can. Also, we want to make it easier for people who have been victimized to report. That's one of the most important things.

Ahmad—Can we count on a faculty member for our team?

Robertson—Yes. If we cannot have a Senator, could we appoint someone?

Waller—I'd like to volunteer for this campaign.

Ahmad—Thank you.

VIII. Guest: Andrew McNitt (Commitment to Excellence Scholarships)

McNitt—I am here to ask for access to the Faculty Senate listserv. We are creating the endowment for the Commitment to Excellence Scholarships and would like to use the listserv to communicate with the faculty. We began the campaign the Friday before exam week in the spring and had great success—a number of generous people have donated. But after summer, we need to get our momentum back.

So far, we have raised \$4500 for the cash-in-cash-out part of the account and about \$8000 for the endowment.

This is not a good time to ask for money, but it's never been a good time. We have had no faculty/staff campaign for 3 years because of concerns about pensions. We have bad years for a while.

Stowell—Last year, we implicitly endorsed the scholarship. I went to the website. I gave, but there wasn't a good way to give to that particular fund.

McNitt—I have cards. All departments got cards last spring. I agree the website is a problem. We'd like to get that addressed. The Faculty Senate listserv would provide us more access to more faculty members.

Young—I want to speak in favor of this initiative as part of the organizing committee. One thing I will disagree with: I think this is a very good time. Here is an opportunity for the faculty and staff to stand up and show strong support for our students at a time when they particularly need something. They are being let down by the politicians and others. We are concerned about our

colleagues and our own situations, of course. But we are able to make a gesture, even a small one, in support of our students. We can help shift some of the cost of scholarships from appropriated funds to this endowment. It is a clear statement that faculty believe in this place and our students. And we are willing to put our own pelf [*OED*: lucre] into it. I think we should support this.

Robertson—I am sorry if I personally slowed this down when you sent me the initial request. My only objection was that we would be sending this to twenty-two people whose jobs are ending in December.

McNitt—It is true, and we are avoiding approaching ACFs and staff right now.

Young—We had a conversation with Pres. Glassman. He asked, “Can administrators contribute?” Yes, they can.

Stowell—I move that we advertise for this effort on a periodic or annual basis.

Abebe seconded.

Motion passed: 10 yes /0 no /0 abstain

IX. Bylaws Revisions

Sterling—We have a document that outlines proposed changes to our bylaws; we were waiting on the constitutional changes to be approved. Most of the proposed bylaws changes are not particularly substantive. The change that’s most significant is to way we fill vacancies. Current language requires us to go back to the election in which that person was elected, then if there is no one, we move forward through time. There are questions regarding whether that is the best process. The change would free us to appoint whom we want for a position and specifies the length of their appointment.

Most of the rest of the changes would revise the bylaws so they say what we already do.

X. Robertson—Anything further? We are adjourned.

Adjournment at 3:12

Respectfully submitted,

Jeannie Ludlow, Acting Recorder

Provost and Vice President For Academic Affairs

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Charleston, Illinois 61920-3099

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October 6, 2015

President David M. Glassman
Eastern Illinois University
600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, IL 61920

Dear President Glassman,

As long-standing staff members from the Office of Academic Affairs, we write to acknowledge our full support of Provost Blair Lord.

Since the Provost was hired in 2001, we have witnessed that he is an individual with great integrity, common sense, foresight, and compassion. In our considerable experience, no academic officer has done more or worked harder for the benefit of Eastern Illinois University than Provost Lord. He goes beyond expectations to encourage broad-based, collegial debate of significant issues, to continue his commitment toward shared-governance, and he works tirelessly on behalf of all University employees. And from a more personal perspective, none has fostered a more supportive, positive, or productive work environment.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jeffrey Cross in cursive.

Jeffrey Cross

Handwritten signature of Candace Flatt in cursive.

Candace Flatt

Handwritten signature of Janet Fopay in cursive.

Janet Fopay

Handwritten signature of Karen Johnson in cursive.

Karen Johnson

Handwritten signature of Billie Rawlings in cursive.

Billie Rawlings

cc: Faculty Senate



Jemmie Robertson <jemmierobertson@gmail.com>

Faculty Senate

Billie L Rawlings <brawlings@eiu.edu>

Tue, Oct 6, 2015 at 9:51 AM

To: Jemmie Robertson <jrobertson@eiu.edu>

Dr. Robertson,

I am truly sad, as an employee and as a student, to see a proposed no-confidence vote on the agenda of the Faculty Senate directed at Dr. Blair Lord. President Glassman just gave his State of the University address and it was so positive and we have a new President and new opportunities to move forward. Now the Faculty Senate is considering a no-confidence vote? The timing is terrible. Shouldn't Dr. Lord be allowed to try to move forward with the new President and implement some of Dr. Glassman's ideas for the University before something as serious as a no-confidence vote? The VPAA Office is running with limited staff, less than we have had since before 1987. Dr. Lord is working hard for the University and its faculty and this is how he is repaid? I Dr. Perry rode off to Texas in his new BMW, probably drawing a huge retirement salary, while Dr. Lord stayed here to try to make EIU a better place. It seems as if some faculty members are blaming Dr. Lord for everything, while other administrators may have been more directly responsible for the current situation of the University. Dr. Lord has worked hard to see that faculty have had to make very few cuts compared to other groups. He has been supportive and proud of Eastern's faculty in numerous ways. He is in a very difficult position because he has to do what is best for the University, and it has not been without pain to him. Losing Dr. Lord would cripple the VPAA office and stall any progress in moving forward.

I have worked at Eastern Illinois University for 28 years and I truly love Eastern. A co-worker once told me that it is a privilege to work here and I truly believe that statement. I have worked for several Vice Presidents and Blair Lord is the best we have had at EIU. I am writing this email in support of Dr. Lord and requesting that the Faculty Senate vote down any type of no-confidence resolution. This year we were up a little in new freshmen, which is a wonderful first step. The Admissions staff (under Dr. Lord's guidance) is working tirelessly trying to draw in more students. Most other state universities were not up in enrollment. It takes teamwork to move forward, and I strongly urge the Faculty Senate to vote down any type of no-confidence proposal at this time so that our team can spend its time focusing on recruitment and improving EIU.

Billie Rawlings